

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9692
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USLOSACLANT NORFOLK VA
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
USNMR SHAPE BE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 02159

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, BE, CA
SUBJECT: NATO DEFENSE INITIATIVES: DISCUSSIONS WITH
BELGIAN AND CANADIAN AMBASSADORS

REFS: (A) STATE 52210 DTG 010130Z FEB 78, (B) STATE 42103
DTG 170127Z FEB 78, (C) USNATO 1809 DTG 221812Z FEB 78,
(D) USNATO 1842 DTG 230924Z FEB 78

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SUMMARY: PURSUANT TO REF A, ON MARCH 2 THE CHARGE HAD
SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS WITH SCHUURMANS (BELGIUM) AND HARDY
(CANADA) CONCERNING THEIR REMARKS AT THE FEBRUARY 21
PERMREPS LUNCHEON (REF C). SCHUURMANS STRESSED THAT HE
HAD BEEN SPEAKING ON A PERSONAL BASIS AND WAS ONLY TRYING
TO POINT OUT THE POLITICAL FACTS OF LIFE THAT WOULD MAKE
IT DIFFICULT FOR HIS PRIME MINISTER TO UNDERTAKE DEFINITE
COMMITMENTS AT THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT. HE AGREES THAT
REAL COMMITMENTS ARE EXPECTED AND INTENDS TO URGE
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TINDEMANS TO BE PREPARED TO MAKE SOME. HE ASKED THAT
AMBASSADOR CHAMBERS ASSIST HIM BY MAKING A LOW KEY
APPROACH TO TINDEMANS (SEE PARAGRAPH 4 BELOW). HARDY
CLARIFIED HIS EARLIER REMARKS, INDICATING THAT HIS MAIN
CONCERN WAS THE STRUCTURE OF THE SUMMIT DEBATE ON THE
LTDP AND NOT TASK FORCE REPORTS THEMSELVES. HE IS CON-
CERNED THAT ALLIANCE LEADERS IN REVIEWING THE LTDP MAY

CONCENTRATE ON POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE THREAT, ALLIANCE STRATEGY, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION, RELATIVE VALUE OF TECHNOLOGY, ETC. RATHER THAN ON THE LTDP ITSELF AND ITS FOLLOW-ON. GIVEN HARDY'S CLARIFICATION, WE RECOMMEND THAT AMEMBASSY OTTAWA NOT MAKE AN APPROACH ON THIS SUBJECT TO THE GOC. END SUMMARY.

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1. PURSUANT TO REF A, ON MARCH 3 THE CHARGE VISITED SCHUURMANS (BELGIUM) AND HARDY (CANADA) TO ENQUIRE FURTHER INTO THEIR REMARKS REPORTED IN REF C.

2. SCHUURMANS STRESSED THAT HIS REMARKS HAD BEEN MADE ON A PURELY PERSONAL BASIS. HE SAID HIS CONCERNS LAY IN TWO DIMENSIONS, A PHILOSOPHICAL ONE AND A CONCRETE ONE. IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSION, SCHUURMANS SAID THAT IF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT WERE PRESENTED WITH A PROPOSITION TO SEEK CONVENTIONAL PARITY OR SUFFICIENCY WITH THE WARSAW PACT, THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS WOULD BE SO GREAT THAT HIS PRIME MINISTER COULD ONLY AGREE TO STUDY THE PROPOSITION. THE CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT THIS CONCERN WAS RATHER ABSTRACT, AND SCHUURMANS AGREED THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT ANY MAJOR PROBLEM WOULD ARISE ON THAT SCORE.

3. THE OTHER CONCERN DID NOT STEM FROM FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS BUT FROM POLITICAL REALITIES. REPEATING
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THE ARGUMENT HE HAD MADE EARLIER AT THE PERMREPS LUNCHEON, SCHUURMANS SAID THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF BELGIUM TO UNDERTAKE REAL COMMITMENTS TO CONCRETE PROPOSALS AT THE SUMMIT, GIVEN THE NECESSITY TO CONSULT BELGIUM'S POLITICAL PARTIES.

4. THE CHARGE DREW FULLY ON REF B IN POINTING OUT THE GOALS OF THE LTDP AND THE NEED FOR SERIOUS PARTICIPATION BY ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS CONCERNED. SCHUURMANS AGREED FULLY WITH THE CHARGE'S REMARKS AND SAID THAT HE HAD ALREADY ARRANGED TENTATIVELY TO MEET WITH TINDEMANS A COUPLE OF WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SUMMIT TO TRY TO PERSUADE HIM TO MAKE SOME DEFINITE COMMITMENTS AT THE WASHINGTON MEETING. HE WOULD POINT OUT THAT SOME GENERAL STATEMENTS WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH. IN THIS CONNECTION, SCHUURMANS SAID IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HIS EFFORTS IF, PRIOR TO HIS MEETING WITH HIS PRIME MINISTER, AMBASSADOR CHAMBERS COULD USE AN AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY TO INDICATE TO TINDEMANS, IN A LOW-KEY WAY, US EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SUMMIT MEETING. THE CHARGE SAID HE WOULD REPORT THIS SUGGESTION.

5. HARDY, CLARIFYING HIS REMARKS AT THE PERMREPS LUNCHEON, SAID HE HAD NOT MEANT TO SUGGEST A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE THREAT OR OF NATO'S STRATEGY. HIS REMARKS WERE MEANT TO BE DIRECTED AT THE STRUCTURE OF SUMMIT DISCUSSION OF THE LTDP.

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6. HARDY SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT ALLIANCE LEADERS HAVE A SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF THE LTDP. HOWEVER, HE WAS CONCERNED THAT ALLIANCE LEADERS' NATURAL TENDENCIES WOULD LEAD THEM AWAY FROM THAT SUBJECT. HE SAID THAT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 USNATO 02159

IF RECENT CONSULTATIONS (E.G., THE LONDON SUMMIT) WERE A GUIDE, LEADERS LIKE PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU MIGHT PASS OVER DEFENSE COMMITMENT ISSUES TO EMPHASIZE THE POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE THREAT. OTHER ISSUES THAT MIGHT BE POLES OF ATTRACTION ARE ALLIANCE STRATEGY, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OR THE RELATIVE VALUE OF TECHNOLOGY.

7. HARDY SAID HE HAD RAISED THIS CONCERN BECAUSE IT WAS IMPORTANT TO TRY TO STRUCTURE THE SUMMIT DEBATE IN WAYS THAT WOULD LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF DISCUSSION STRAYING FROM THE LTDP. HARDY HAD NO SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW THAT MIGHT BE DONE.

8. COMMENT: GIVEN HARDY'S CLARIFICATION OF HIS EARLIER

REMARKS, WE RECOMMEND THAT AMEMBASSY OTTAWA NOT MAKE
ANY APPROACH ON THIS SUBJECT TO THE GOC. END COMMENT.
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